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ABSTRACT

College Activities of the 70's deals with the role of the Activities Director as educator, using the campus as his classroom. This individual is involved in the education of students by assisting them with their socialization and maturation process, through student involvement in presenting programs for and with the entire college community. The activities offices of the 70's should be using, to develop their roles as educators, newsletters, the newspaper, and other media, and should establish a sound program for new students that extends well into their first academic year. Activities Offices should be "reaching out" to students, rather than expecting people to come to them. The activity Officer must be an ombudsman for students in their interacting with faculty and administration, as well as a liason to all "estates" of the college community. This individual must know the pulse of the student body, and be a knowledgeable voice in referring students concerns to interested faculty, administration and members of the lay community. (Author)

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COLLEGE ACTIVITIES IN THE 70'S

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In discussing the topic or the question, the future of activities, perhaps we should ask is there a need any longer on a college campus for Activities Directors or coordinators, and if so how has this need changed. This presentation will attempt to look at the role of activities directors and their relationship to an entire college community in the educational process of an institution of higher education.

The 1950's and early 1960's witnessed activity programs existing in a manner which has, unfortunately, resulted in sterotyping many current positions concerned with student affairs. When one speaks of Greek activities, Homecoming, Spring Weekend, and football games, one always thinks of the activities director. It is a feeling of many that the role of this individual does not go beyond these type of events.

The late 1960's also brought to the forefront an increased realization by the student of his (her) importance in the operation of the college. Many administrators and faculty alike have indicated the importance now of the student on any campus. "If the students were not here, we wouldn't have a job," is a statement commonly heard in the college community. Yet, a strong complaint heard by many students is that decisions affecting them are made by people least aware of their concerns and problems. Where does the activities director fit into this type of situation? Clearly, one can see that a director, regardless of what kind of campus he is on, large, small, private, or state should be involved in interacting a great deal with students. He would not be limiting his interaction with students only to office time or classroom situations, but must be out among the students, working with them, talking with them and socializing with them. This liason of students to faculty and administration must be totally aware of happenings on the campus and the feelings of the students. The faculty member sees one type of student, that being one concerned with the success in the traditionally academic areas, but the activities director sees the "whole" student, one concerned with his personal life and his entire social-

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ization process. These concerns are not necessarily going to be of any importance to the individual five years from now, but they are extremely important to the student today. Many faculty members are surprised at the amount of problems that many students have outside the classroom. The activities director, then, perhaps more than any individual in the college community, sees the entire student and must understand and work with the entire student and the problems and concerns the individual faces.

Another area of importance is, of course, programming. Programming is vital to any activities profession, but the activities director must extend his talents beyond the programming area. He must be "A Man For All Seasons." A college community in many instances, is a sample population of the world outside, being made up of many diversified and varied segments of society. While the individual activities director, in many instances, cannot identify with all segments of society. He must have at his disposal individuals, whether they be students, faculty, or administration, who can work with him in programming events for all segments and "estates of the college community." We must have an awareness of what concerns the changing student and work to present programs that will be educationally and socially valuable for him. What is good one year, for example, may become out-dated the next. We must continue to be in a state of flux with a common goal among us. This goal must be the education of students outside the classroom situation and this education must bring together people from all segments of our society and promote better understanding of one another.

No longer is the activities director concerned soley with the needs and desires of the "student leaders," or is the interaction limited to these people. The activities director must be a counselor to all and a believer in the individuality of every student

The Activities Director, is an administrator to a certain degree but also an educator. He is an educator of students outside of the classroom. He is an individual who not only is concerned about students but is aware of their concerns. Students in a college classroom can read about brotherhood, indivdualism, and human rights, but unless they have the opportunity of interaction and are able to become indivduals, then their educational experience is limited. Interaction is another educational experience the activities program should provide . Interaction with people is provided through a well-rounded activties

program. Students should be involved in programming in order to put into effect ideas and ideals. An activities program can allow the student to understand different people and backgrounds and allow each other to have more contact with people. Educational programs can bring together new and diversified viewpoints, plus allow one another to experience and relate to each other. The activities director must work with all areas of student personnel and faculty, as well as the entire community in developing educationally valuable programs. I was asked to mention, in preparing this presentation, some specific programs and areas where our activities office has developed what we feel are educationally valuable programs for the student body. Some of the programs are:

1. An Issues and answers program which "taps" students, faculty, and administrators as well as members of the community to discuss with the student body questions involving local issues facing the college community. Some examples of discussions have been Human Sexuality, The Role of Faculty in the Classroom, The Role of Faculty in Academic Advisement, and The Language Requirement, are some of the topics covered. The Issues and Answers Program is held once every three weeks on the College campus.
2. Symposiums are held twice a semester and look at national and international issues with local and nationally known individuals discussing their particular area of expertise. Some examples of topics discussed or to be discussed by the Symposium include the enviorment, population growth, and drugs.
3. Weekly Planetarium Shows to the entire Cortland community are featured every Sunday evening. The topics of the shows change every three weeks and this is beneficial scheduled cultural program we feel that is beneficial to the entire community.

It is valuable to all college activities offices to use the media in the 70's as much as possible in order to bring about sound programming. As I mentioned earlier, flexibility of this office is vital and the 70's are the years when the activities people particularly are going to have to reach out beyond their offices, and beyond the type of programs where one can attend in person, but instead supplement these type of events with the media to also present sound programs. At Cortland, for example, we have established a

weekly newsletter which lists campus events with descriptions, but also focuses on Freshmen and what they are doing, as well as campus organizations. The distribution of this newsletter is important and we have set-up a system where each residence hall room is given a copy of the Capsule, as we call it. Dealing with freshment particularly is vital, since the activities offices of the 70's must begin working with Freshmen from their first day on campus and develop a continually educationally valuable program external to the classroom experience for these young people. We all realize the importance that Orientation can have to ones attitude regarding a new environment, and an essential part of the activities office of the 70's will be aimed at providing a valuably educational program in this area. A newsletter or any new student on campus. It should be emphasized again that the role of the activities for the freshmen should begin during the orientation program, whether it be in the summer or in the fall.

At Cortland, we are also using the campus radio station to provide what we feel is a valuable program to the student body. We have begun bi-weekly radio shows entitled "On The Line", which highlights different groups and individuals on the show. Students call in with questions and or comments regarding the issue of the evening and thereby provide important feed-back to the individuals, as well as help the individuals to explain their position on a number of what we consider important items. The media also provides an excellent avenue for the faculty and the administration to get what they feel are important messages or ideas across to students that perhaps they have not been able to do do at an earlier time.

When once asked then, are you doing creative programming? Can we answer yes or no? Is creative programming only other programs used in a different form and are we beyond the realm of actual creativity in programming? Perhpas this may be so, but I do not feel it is. I feel that creativity, for acitivities people, is the willingness to change and be flexible in providing a well-rounded educational program. What is good today, does not necessarily mean it is going to be valuable tomorrow, as I mentioned earlier, and we must be on top of these changes and willing to bring about the implimentation of new ideas. I have just mentioned a few of the things we are doing in Cortland which I hope you will find worthwhile, but one thing we are attempting to do is continually reevaluate and look at programs that exist. Certainly we have the major weekends, we have the concerts, we have

. . . the jam sessions, folk singers, plus organizational programming, but there is a need for us to get away from strictly relying on a student organization to develop and arrange all of the programs during the 70's. The activities offices can no longer rely on the student organizations being the force to reach out to the students, but we must be the force to go beyond these organizations to provide these type of programs, I was speaking about. Our classroom is the entire campus and community and we must utilize this every-day of the year.

Is the Director of Student Activities then an appropriate title for such individuals? Perhaps the position should be regarded as the director of Student Affairs. He must be an Ombudsman for the students in their interacting with faculty and administration, plus a liason to all "estates" of the college community. This individual must know the "pulse" of the student body and be a knowledgeable voice in referring students concerns to interested faculty, administration, and members of the community.

Then we can ask ourselves again, do we need activities directors for the 70's or is this just a waste of state or college funds? I hope you will agree with me that the value the activities director has to the educational development in the social maturation of the student has no bounds. This type of education with which more and more students are beginning to realize, is basic to them perhaps even more so than the classroom experiences. This is the role the activities offices are going to have to assume in the 1970's. We are going to have to more than ever before reach out beyond our offices, beyond our traditional organizations, and expand into an area that encompasses the entire community.